

**Reflections on Terror from Aldous Huxley to Margaret Atwood:
Dystopic Fiction as Politically Symbolic**

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"Nearly all children nowadays were horrible. What was worst of all was that by means of such organizations as the Spies they were systematically turned into ungovernable little savages, and yet this produced in them no tendency whatever to rebel against the discipline of the Party. On the contrary, they adored the Party and everything connected with it... All their ferocity was turned outwards, against the enemies of the State, against foreigners, traitors, saboteurs, thought-criminals."

- George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Given George Orwell's transformation from self-proclaimed liberal to "right-wing propagandist" (Phillips 69), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is generally regarded as an indictment of the totalitarian state; more particularly, Orwell's critics note that his portrait of the future, dystopic world is fixed within its historical moment and works primarily as a critique of Stalinism. However, while Orwell's concentration on Stalinism establishes his novel as a product of historical events, its fixation on the political terrors of its time ("enemies of the State," "traitors," and "thought-criminals"), its usage of a future setting as a way to reflect upon the problems of its age, and its critique of the utopian ideologies of its time actually link it firmly with much of the dystopian literature that has followed.

The dystopian societies of more recent novels like Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* seem equally critical of state power and they also create dystopias to envision the worst possible societies. This quote from Orwell's novel, therefore, can function as a metaphor for dystopian societies in general; present in all dystopic fiction is a hyper-awareness of the type of power that is exercised over the members of the dystopia. As Tom Moylan and Lawrence Phillips claim, writers of dystopic fiction tend to use future dystopias to internalize present problems and provide a critique of political, social, and economic structures. What is perhaps more potent, and what will be the subject of this essay, is the genre's focus on the form of "political terror" that characterizes its historical moment. Dystopic fiction as

a genre tends to use political terror as a basis upon which to critique the power, or powerlessness, of the state.

Most dystopian novels, whether written in the beginning of the twentieth century or at the end of it, envision a government whose very existence revolves around some form of political terror, whether it is defined as external threats to individual autonomy or the safety of the population. However, the form that this terror takes changes over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In “‘Dare to struggle, dare to win’: On Science Fiction, Totality, and Agency in the 1990s,” Tom Moylan states that what the framework of dystopic fiction provides is “a way to employ the analytic tool of totality—and a more direct access to the dynamics of oppositional *agency*” (Moylan, “Dare” 51-52). Moylan discusses the imagination of state power as totalitarian and highlights the struggle that exists between the state and the individual, marking totality as a danger to humanity. He also characterizes the genre as liberal critiques of power and claims that the narrative shifts that occur between time periods are simply reversions to conservative thought, or “a time of ‘conservative restoration’” (Moylan, “Dare” 52). While Moylan rightly argues that dystopian novels routinely imagine the monolithic state as the coming catastrophe for humanity, his analytic seems to fall short when we look at the longer trajectory of the 20th and 21st century dystopic fictions.

Although Moylan recognizes that the narratives of dystopic fiction shift over time, he overlooks the theme of political terror that exists, and is central to, all dystopic fiction. When we place the dystopian worlds of Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome* beside those of earlier dystopian novels like *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World*, we do not see a retrenchment of liberal or critical

expressions of government; rather, we see a marked shift in the dystopian genre's focus on political terror. I argue that the narrative changes that are made over the course of the history of these novels index a change in the idea of political terror. In particular, we see that the narratives of dystopian novels have shifted in waves that are distinguished and separated by the fall of Communism. Dystopian novels written after both World Wars and through the Cold War will be referred to as First Wave dystopic fiction. In my reading, the narratives of First Wave dystopic fiction reveal political terror as concentrated in the totalitarian, monolithic state that poses a threat to the existence of the individual. The narrative changes that mark the post Communist, Second Wave of dystopic fiction reveal a shift in the form that political terror takes by demonstrating the fear of an inept state that is too weak to protect its citizens from non-state terrors like disease, genetics, terrorist attacks, and economic failure, among others. Before turning to the First Wave of dystopian literature, however, we need to return first to the emergence of the term "dystopia" as it surfaced in the 19th century and later migrated into literary and political theory of the last century.

Theories of Dystopia:

The term "dystopia" stemmed from Thomas More's imaginings of a Utopia; British nineteenth century politicians were obsessed with the idea of a state that could be controlled for the happiness of its population, although they did not necessarily see it as a state of pure control. Rather, they believed that by imposing strict rules of social, political, and economic interaction on its citizens, a state could eventually become a perfect enough society to no longer require laws. It was in response to this idea that the word "dystopia" was first invented. Richard Trahair credits John Stuart Mill with the

coining of the term in a parliamentary debate about Ireland in 1868 (Trahair 110). “It is, perhaps, too complimentary to call them Utopians,” Mill said, referring to the Conservative government’s unwillingness to grant the Irish the right to own land or choose their own religion (Trahair 110); “They ought rather to be called dys-topians, or caco-topians. What is commonly called Utopian is something too good to be practicable; but what they appear to favour is too bad to be practicable” (Trahair 110). Mill feared the effects of the political conservatism of people like Edmund Burke, who believed that society could progress to some version of a utopia; it was these very ideas that Mill referred to as “social tyranny” in *On Liberty*. The working definition of a “dystopia” in the way that Mill originally used it, therefore, seemed to have been a critique of conservative thought, but also a way to highlight the bad aspects of nineteenth century conservatism.

Like the political context in which the word dystopia was coined, dystopian literature is never very far removed from the politics of its time; these futuristic works always have their roots in political problems of the present. This idea has perhaps led literary critics like Tom Moylan and Frederic Jameson to interpret dystopian literature within various political frameworks, such as the fears of capitalism, total war, or threats to democracy. In *Seeds of Time*, Jameson shows how works of dystopian literature reveal critical information about their time periods and how the emergence of the dystopian novel influenced the meaning of the term “dystopia.” For example, he states that the term was originally a “critique compounded of Edmund Burke and of the nineteenth century additions” but has since been transformed by the modern and postmodern novelists into a “critique of high modernism itself as repressive, totalizing, phallogentric,

authoritarian, and redolent of an even more sublime and inhuman hubris than anything Burke could have attributed to his Jacobin contemporaries” (Jameson, *ST* 53). While Jameson seems to be making the case that dystopian literature can be interpreted as a response to modernization, his language (“repressive,” “totalizing,” “authoritarian”) suggests that he is aware of the political fears that are revealed through First Wave dystopic fiction, although he never says it explicitly. While Jameson sets the framework for thinking of dystopian literature as an index of historical change, he never quite approaches the interpretation of dystopian literature as a genre, nor does he show how individual texts display progression or change in prominent political ideas.

What is at stake, then, is not just how dystopic fictions operate, but that we attend to the nuances, to the changing historical conditions that give rise to these novels. If their futural projections are indeed historically located as Jameson claims, then it makes sense that those projections of fear and extinction alter when the monolithic state is no longer a threat in the post Cold War world. For example, novelists that wrote during the collapse of Communism were coming to terms with new fears, and therefore tend simultaneously to take on concerns of both First and Second Wave dystopic fiction. They are beginning to learn to shed the fears associated with totalitarianism as the threat of Communism becomes more and more a distant memory, but the concerns of globalization and interdependence that expose the weakness of the state are only just beginning to reveal themselves. It is not until the world officially becomes a smaller, and thus scarier, place with the advent of new technologies like the Internet and cell phones that Second Wave dystopic fiction emerges in all of its glory, unashamedly critiquing the weakness of state power and the irrelevance of its politics.

First Wave Dystopic Fiction:

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are central texts in the First Wave of dystopian novels. Like E.M. Forester's pre-WWI *The Machine Stops* and so many other dystopic novels published after both World Wars and through the Cold War, Huxley and Orwell's iconic novels display all the characteristics typical to this genre, such as high levels of government control over its citizens (in terms of constant surveillance, harsh punishments, and rehabilitation of social deviants), a governmental monopoly on knowledge and definitions of reality, and a history that establishes the total power of the state. In short, all of these characteristics of the First Wave dystopian novels indicate a fear of the monolithic, all powerful state. This section will demonstrate how the social contract between the state and the individual is recast in dystopian worlds. The state gains total power to manage its population, its very existence being predicated on its ability to administer the population in such a way as to protect itself. These key dystopian novels portray this through the ways in which they imagine state power as physical and psychological mechanisms of control that aim to abolish individual autonomy, which is seen as inherently disruptive. This is showcased in Orwell's novel through his vision of the security and war state; while themes of security exist in Huxley's *Brave New World* as well, Huxley's novel focuses on the total state that pacifies its citizens through harnessing their rebellious energies and channeling them toward the harmless pastimes of physical pleasure, consumption, and general contentment. What First Wave dystopic fiction does, then, is to mark the breach of the social contract between the individual and the state, resulting in the constriction or management of the individual and the ultimate freezing of history through the stagnation

of human progress. By focusing on the lives of individuals in their respective dystopias, Orwell and Huxley depict the various ways in which the total state attempts, and often succeeds in attempting, to completely stamp out the individual in order to maintain its control over the population. Through exposing the total state's breach of the social contract, the First Wave dystopian novelists express their fears of the monolithic state.

The mode of power that novels like *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* index is based on a combination of surveillance, massive state intervention in everyday life, and, ultimately, the production of self-regulating individuals. Michel Foucault has called this kind of power "disciplinary power," which is a type of power that is based on a permanent system of surveillance that is less expensive and more efficient than sovereign power (sovereign power serving to control the land and goods more than actual people) because it forces individuals to self-regulate their behavior (Foucault 36). The First Wave dystopian writers all recognize the existence of such power. In fact, the central mechanism of dystopian power in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is literally constant surveillance. By foregrounding surveillance as the main tool of disciplinary power, Orwell highlights the total state's intrusion into realms previously secured and protected by the social contract.

The first few pages of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* serve to hammer the concept of constant surveillance into the mind of the reader, compelling the reader to be conscious of what life would be like under such circumstances. We see Winston Smith, the protagonist, adjusting his movements according to his awareness that someone might be watching; in the first scene, Winston "set his features into the expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen" (Orwell 8). A

telescreen is described as a device that “received and transmitted simultaneously” (Orwell 6), that watches you at the same time that it constantly brainwashes. Because there is “no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment” (Orwell 6), it is necessary for Winston to discipline his every action to meet the Party’s standards of “orthodox” behavior. He is even fearful of striking the wrong posture when his back is toward the telescreen because, as he is aware, “even a back can be revealing” (Orwell 7). Winston also lives in constant fear of unconsciously revealing his hatred for the government: “the smallest thing could give you away. A nervous tic, an unconscious look of anxiety, a habit of muttering to yourself—anything that carried with it the suggestion of abnormality, of having something to hide” (Orwell 54). By demonstrating that even bodily movements or facial expressions and postures are regimented and controlled by the total state through its utilization of disciplinary power, Orwell suggests that the total state lives in fear of the individual and therefore finds it necessary to control or prevent autonomy.

More than the rigid control of the citizen’s body, Orwell reveals that the purpose of constant surveillance in Oceania is to detect “thought-criminals.” In Orwell’s dystopia, merely thinking rebellious thoughts about the government constitutes a punishable crime, one punished more harshly than crimes like murder or theft. Near the beginning of the book, Winston begins to write hateful thoughts about the government in his diary; as he does so, he recognizes his actions as thought-crime. He knows that “he would still have committed, even if he had never set pen to paper—the essential crime that contained all others in itself,” and therefore, “whether he wrote DOWN WITH BIG BROTHER, or whether he refrained from writing it, made no difference” (Orwell 19).

Thought-crime is punishable for its non-acceptance of Party doctrine; therefore, any action that follows is almost irrelevant, because the thought on its own is the worst of all possible crimes. Punishing rogue thoughts in Orwell's dystopia weeds out potential rebels or opponents of the world order, but it is also the elimination of individual autonomy and innovative thinking. Winston's diary entries and his conflict over what to write or not write reveal how deeply the state's power has penetrated its citizens' minds and bodies.

While Huxley's *Brave New World* also emphasizes control and surveillance, the monolithic state in this dystopia is less about watching and regulating its citizens and more about biologically producing them. This method is illuminated from the very beginning of the book. *Brave New World* begins with the Director of Hatcheries taking Alpha (the highest caste of citizens) students on a tour of The Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre. The function of the conditioning center is chemically engineering embryos (who develop in test tubes) to fit the standards of the World State, which serves several purposes. First of all, the conditioning center chemically alters the embryos so that the five castes (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and Epsilon) are physically distinguishable. The Alphas being the highest are allowed to develop into strong, tall, robust, quick-witted, intellectual, fully developed human beings, while the Epsilons are given a reduced supply of oxygen, dosed with alcohol so that one egg will split and produce an average of seventy-two humans (who would all be identical to each other), and exposed to other methods of conditioning depending on their predestined occupations. The Director shows the students some embryos that were kept in constant rotation "to improve their sense of balance....They learn to associate topsy-turvydom

with well-being; in fact, they're only truly happy when they're standing on their heads" (Huxley 17). It also helps to predestine the population for certain occupations, and "making people like their unescapable social destiny" (Huxley 16), which the Director explains is the aim of conditioning. When discussing the Bokanovski process (the process of splitting an egg to create an average of seventy-two identical humans), the Director quotes the World State's motto, "Community, Identity, Stability," and claims, "if we could boganovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved" (Huxley 7). The purpose of conditioning its population from birth is thus explained as a method of stabilizing the world. By making people "happy" with their occupations in life, they will have no reason to rebel. In this way, Huxley, in contrast to Orwell, shows us a world where people are produced to be happy and content; because they are all engineered to be pleased with their social positions, they hypothetically have no reason to rebel. In addition, the World State has made every form of physical satisfaction readily available, harnessing the typically rebellious energies of drugs and sexuality to exercise greater control. In this way, Huxley's novel envisions the total state's control through pacification of the population, as opposed to Orwell's massive systems of surveillance.

The First Wave dystopian novelists were aware, however, that the physical means of control are not sufficient to control a population. Total control of a population must extend to the mind, must control its machinery, and it must also control the external world, if not literally, then at least generate the illusion of such control in the minds of its citizens. Pedro Luis Luchini, in "Turning to Orwell to Understand Orwell's Problem: A Sociolinguistic View," explains how the government asserts its authority over its citizens through use of psychological mechanisms of power. He writes, "In *1984*, surviving was

not just a matter of remaining passive against the government. In fact, party members needed to feel, think and know that quality of life in Oceania was excellent and that Big Brother was a figure worth adoring. This could only be achieved by tricking one's mind into believing that reality naturally consisted of whatever was dictated, and not of whatever was evidenced or perceived. Toward the end of the novel, it is Orwell himself who succinctly explains how this mental disposition affected Oceania's society and culture: 'All happenings are in the mind. Whatever happens in all minds, truly happens.'” (Luchini). As Luchini effectively suggests, Orwell’s novel demonstrates the dangerous level of power that totalitarian governments can have over its citizens’ psychology, penetrating deeply enough into their minds to control their perceptions of reality.

Both Orwell and Huxley recognized the psychological impact that totalitarian authority could potentially have on its people. For example, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the citizens of Oceania are constantly being watched, but they are also never allowed to forget it. On every street corner is a poster with the simultaneously comforting and terrifying, almost godlike image of the head of Big Brother (the authoritarian head of the Party that may or may not actually exist). His image is “so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move” (Orwell 5), and beneath the picture is the message: “BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU” (Orwell 5). The physical control that the Party has over the citizens of Oceania, in this way, extends itself into the psychological realm of control. Like Foucault’s idea of the Panopticon, a system for controlling the actions of one’s subjects through constant surveillance, once the subjects of Oceania get used to the idea of being watched, they will begin to monitor their own actions and act in the desired ways. Therefore, it is not enough for the Party to watch its citizens constantly; it must

hammer the idea of constant surveillance into the minds of its citizens in order to be assured of its total control.

Another common area of dystopian exercise of psychological control over its citizens is influencing their emotions. This type of psychological control is seen in both Huxley and Orwell's dystopian novels. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, when O'Brien (a member of the Thought Police) is in the process of rehabilitating Winston (from opponent of the Party to idolizer of Big Brother), he explains to Winston that the aim of the Party is to perpetuate a state where "there will be no emotions except fear, rage, triumph, and self-abasement" (Orwell 220). The World State actually generates these emotions through the constant propaganda issuing from every Party member's telescreen (which cannot be switched off). The mandatory viewing of Two Minutes Hate affects an actual emotional response from its viewers, and brainwashes them to oppose all ideas contrary to the Party. Even Winston, who is a stalwart enemy of the Party, cannot withstand its effects. He notes that "the horrible thing about the Two Minutes Hate was not that one was obliged to act part, but that it was impossible to avoid joining in.... A hideous ecstasy of fear and vindictiveness, a desire to kill, to torture, to smash faces in with a sledge hammer, seemed to flow through the whole group of people like an electric current, turning one even against one's will into a grimacing, screaming lunatic" (Orwell 16). This quote demonstrates how close the Party has come in Orwell's dystopia to actually controlling human emotion. The World State of *Brave New World* has a similar effect on human emotion with their use of soma, an alcohol-like substance (without the side-effects) that forces happiness and calm among the citizens upon which it is inflicted, on its population. Its effects are demonstrated most acutely in the scene in which the

Savage instigates a riot by throwing the Deltas' ration of soma out of the window. In order to stop the riot, the police release soma vapor on the rioters, after which, "two minutes later...the Deltas were kissing and hugging one another—half a dozen twins at a time in comprehensive embrace. Even Helmholtz and the Savage were almost crying" (Huxley 215). This scene shows how pleasure is used to control and repress any form of resistance. The utilization of emotional and psychological control in both novelists' dystopias shows a similar idea of political terror in Orwell and Huxley's novels, mainly that of totalitarian power and the monolithic state.

Psychological control over its citizens, however, depends not only on causing them to self-monitor, but also on the government's assertion of its total power and the citizens' acceptance of this fact. This level of power over its citizens is, again, seen in both Orwell and Huxley's dystopias in rather similar ways. The main way that the governments in First Wave dystopian novels assert their unilateral and unchallenged authority is through altering historical facts to legitimize the ideals upon which it is founded. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Winston's job is to "correct" historical documents that prove the Party wrong or that contradict any assertion made by the Party. This process is constant and serves to legitimize the condition of life sustained by the Party "because there did not exist, and never again could exist, any standard against which it could be tested" (Orwell 79), the existing accounts serving only to perpetuate the idea that the citizens of Oceania have a better standard of living than ever existed. The total authority of the Party is also sustained by this process through their declaring any rebels to be "unpersons," which involves removing the person from any historical record so that he or she never officially existed. By doing this, the Party has the ability to claim that no

one is or ever was unhappy as a citizen of Oceania. By advocating this idea, the Party assures that any citizen that is unhappy feels alone and completely disempowered.

Another function of the alteration of history is to “to arrest progress and freeze history at a chosen moment. The familiar pendulum swing was to happen once more, and then stop” (Orwell 167-168). In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Orwell claims that totalitarian rulers aim to change the cyclical nature of history; they do not want to ever have to give up their power, so they take precautionary measures in order to keep that from happening. To do so, however, they have to effectively freeze history. Human progress would lead to innovative ideas, a more productive economy which would allow people more leisure time to become more intelligent, and eventually a revolt of the middle class that would be led by those new ideas. In order to sustain their power, then, Orwell’s and Huxley’s governments must effectively stop history and impede progress. Peter Akroyd exposes the relative ease of such an undertaking through his thoughts on the linear or nonlinear nature of time: “Contemporary theorists have suggested that linear time itself is a figment of the human imagination, but London has already anticipated their conclusions. There are many different forms of time in the city, and it would be foolish of me to change its character for the sake of creating a conventional narrative” (qtd in Phillips 71). Using Akroyd’s ideas, Lawrence Phillips argues that history exposed in the material makeup of the city make it impossible for Orwell’s dystopia to effectively freeze time, but he also suggests a non-linear quality of time that makes it possible and easy for different times to exist side by side; if different times can exist at the same time, then the chronology of history becomes irrelevant.

Perhaps one way to ensure the freezing of time is through the formalized stratification of society. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, society is divided into members of the Inner Party, Outer Party members, and proletarians (the uneducated and the poor who make up 80% of the population). The citizens of *Brave New World's* World State consist of members of five different castes, from Alpha to Epsilon, Alpha being the highest. The clear class structures of both dystopias, and their absence of social mobility, marks the success of both in freezing time at a certain place. The dystopias' effective freezing of time is also demonstrated through the plight of the protagonists in both novels; the fact that time is frozen and they cannot ever hope to transcend the identity forced upon them by their class shows how both protagonists are successfully suppressed by the government through their freezing of history.

The technique of altering history is portrayed in *Brave New World* as well, particularly through society's perception of traditional religious and family values as "barbaric" because of the World State's manipulation of history and eradication of books written before the creation of the World State. By not allowing its citizens access to real history, the World State, like Oceania, erases any standard of living against which to pit their own. Through controlling history, the World State also has the Hobbesian ability to define norms and standards of "good" and "evil." For example, the word "mother" is treated like a curse word throughout the World State. The traditional family unit would undermine the power of the government over its people; therefore, in order to rid themselves of the threat of loyalties other than to the state, the World State manipulates history to make "the family" seem an unnatural state, and it associates goodness with infantile behavior, sexuality, materialism and consumerism. We see this through the

hypnopædic phrases issued to children during their sleep while they are in the process of being conditioned, like “everybody belongs to everyone else,” perpetuating rampant sexual activity among its citizens and therefore demonizing monogamous relationships, and “the more stitches, the less riches,” which perpetuates consumerist tendencies among the citizens of the World State as a standard of “goodness.”

Along with the control of organizational concepts of reality, such as historicism and the definition of morality, the First Wave dystopian novels also include more concrete examples of dystopian governmental control of the external world to propagate an acceptance and awareness of its power. One of the ways that this idea is established in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is through Oceania’s state of constant warfare. Orwell dedicates several portions of his novel to explain how war allows Oceania a certain psychological power over its citizens. Oceania is always at war with one of the other two world powers, Eurasia and Eastasia; this maintenance of constant warfare is strategic because it gives Oceania a method of destroying the products of human labor [which need to be destroyed to keep the standard of living from rising, which would endanger the Party’s hold on the people by making them too comfortable and thus too intelligent (Orwell 157)], but it also emphasizes the danger that the country is in, which “makes the handing-over of all power to a small caste seem the natural, unavoidable condition of survival” (Orwell 158). The sense of danger is kept at the forefront of the citizens’ minds by the steady rainfall of rocket bombs on Oceania by whichever country it happens to be at war with. At one point, Julia and Winston discuss whether the bombs are inflicted upon the population by the enemy states or by Oceania itself. The answer to this question, Orwell claims, is actually irrelevant. What matters is that all of its citizens believe that they are

released by the enemy, and that they believe that the Party is the only means of protection against the enemy. In this way, the government establishes its total control over the citizens by taking advantage of, or even fabricating, an external threat to their society's existence. The object of the war, then, is not the destruction of the enemy, but "to keep the structure of society intact" (Orwell 164).

The First Wave dystopian novels' demonstration of their governments' control of the external world also extends to control of nature, or of biology. This is a more central theme of *Brave New World*, but it exists subtly throughout *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. One way that the Party establishes their power through controlling biology is by its efforts to control the sex instinct "by careful early conditioning, by games and cold water, by the rubbish that was dinned into them at school and in the Spies and the Youth league" (Orwell 59). Eventually, these methods of eliminating the sex instinct begin to work and "the natural feeling had been driven out of them" (Orwell 59). Near the end of the novel, O'Brien states the Party's intention to get rid of the sex instinct completely, to "abolish the orgasm" and turn procreation into "an annual formality" (Orwell 220), and later to beget future generations through artificial insemination (Orwell 57). The purpose of this is to eliminate a possible danger to the Party, but also to keep "the fear, the hatred, and the lunatic credulity which the Party needed in its members...at the right pitch by bottling some powerful instinct and using it as a driving force" (Orwell 111). By imaging his dystopia as having the capability to utilize biology for its own means, Orwell reveals yet another threat of totalitarian rule.

Brave New World's obsession with the government's control of biology is directly linked to the stability of the World State and the maintenance of its control over the

population. The complete control that the government has over biology demonstrates its total control over its population through their faith that the government ensures them a good standard of living (everyone constantly repeats the hypnopædic phrase, “everyone is happy”). A character in *Brave New World* details the ways that the government controls its citizens’ biology to ensure their better standard of living: “We preserve them from diseases. We keep their internal secretions artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium. We don’t permit their magnesium-calcium ration to fall below what it was at thirty. We give them transfusions of young blood. We keep their metabolism permanently stimulated” (Huxley 111). The World State has also abolished disease and pests like mosquitoes and flies (Huxley 238). The World State’s control of biology, however, does not only extend to control of the external world to give its population a sense of its total power; it also serves to control its population by biologically manufacturing the perfect citizens. In this way, *Brave New World*’s emphasis of control over biology speaks to Huxley’s totalitarian fear on two levels: that of direct physical control over the population, and that of power over the external world in order to psychologically reinforce its control over its citizens.

Despite these mechanisms of control, Orwell and Huxley’s dystopic worlds do contain individuals that are not totally complicit with the state. In both novels, the protagonists are punished for deviation from the norms of their societies. In Winston’s case, he engages in thought-crime and is eventually arrested and rehabilitated by the Thought Police. Bernard is punished because he fails to involve himself in infantile behavior and is too vocal about his heretical, “corrupt” thoughts; because of this, he and his friend Helmholtz are exiled to the Islands. We are exposed to the dystopias through

the plight of the individual; in this way, Orwell and Huxley both reveal the fractured connection that exists between the individual and the state in such a society. Through the plights of these characters and the physical control exercised upon them, both authors demonstrate their fears of totalitarianism and its forms of power.

This idea is shown in various ways throughout *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. One of the main ways that this idea is perpetuated in both novels is through their protagonists. Winston and Bernard serve as the standards of individuality against which to pit the rest of their societies' populations. They both entertain negative and critical thoughts about their respective governments; they both feel like outsiders that have no place in society, and they both recognize the deceptive mechanisms that are utilized by their governments to sustain their power. Winston and Bernard, however, are both very weak symbols of individuality in and of themselves. For example, Winston is a man of above-average intellect that is able to grasp that the government is deceiving its citizens through its steady alteration of historical documents. He understands the mechanisms of power utilized by the Party. He is aware of his superiority over all of the other citizens of Oceania, and at one point has a "curious feeling that this was not a real human being but some kind of dummy" (Orwell 48) as he converses with a fellow Party member. However, his inability to stray too far away from the Party's prescribed method of thinking and standard behavior leads him to his unavoidable fate. It almost seems like he buys into the Party propaganda that uses ideas of enemies of the Party to emphasize Oceania's state of danger. His belief in a resistance leads him to confess his opposition to the Party to a member of the Thought Police under the mistaken impression that the man was a leader of the resistance. The Thought Police was well aware of Winston's

opposition to the Party before this confession, but the act of confessing his opposition to anyone exposes the degree of control that the Party has over him. This action seems to imply that he is less of an individual, that he is susceptible to psychological control because his mind matured within the Party mentality, and that perhaps there is no such thing as a true individual in such a society. Lawrence Phillips comes to a similar conclusion when he analyzes a scene in which Winston fails to recognize the significance of a Prole's memory about life before the Party. He writes that Winston

is trained by the Party to think only in historical terms that he rewrites daily at work. When he questions the Prole in the pub he fails to recognise the value and power of memory: 'A sense of helplessness took hold of Winston. The old man's memory was nothing but a rubbish-heap of details' (82). The old man's reminiscences based in a physical experience of the city do in fact provide Winston with an answer to the question he poses; clearly the 'capitalists' did not dominate the city in the way the Party histories would have it, exposing a chink in their ideological armour that Winston fails to grasp. He is right to identify hope in this respect with the Proles, but he is constitutionally unable to decode the form that hope might take; (Phillips 73)

Phillips recognizes that the fundamental problem with Winston is not his lack of intellect or his pessimism, but that he is a victim of the total state's suppression of the individual, a fact that he does not and cannot overcome.

The same idea can be applied to Bernard as well; his physical differences from other Alphas (Alphas are allowed to fully develop and grow big and strong; Bernard,

however, is small and weak, and it is rumored that he was accidentally conditioned to be small like a Beta) and their rejection of him because of his physical differences give him a sense of individuality and help him become aware of the defects of his society.

However, when he is accepted by other Alphas because of his temporary fame for bringing a Savage from the Indian reservations with him as an experiment, he thrives in the expected lifestyle of an Alpha. When he is accepted by his equals, Bernard is less prone to criticizing his society and its expectations. This makes him less of an individual because it is only in his self-pity that he entertains negative thoughts about the World State. Once again, it leads one to the conclusion that an individual cannot exist within the totalitarian state.

The rehabilitation of Winston and the exile of Bernard are also ways in which Orwell and Huxley portray the effect of totalitarianism on identity and individuality. The interesting thing about Winston's rehabilitation is that, despite the effort that O'Brien puts forth to rehabilitate Winston, he is still killed in the end. This fact makes it clear that it is not the individual that the Party wants to defeat, but the concept of individuality. If it were not the concept of individuality, and their desire to control identity, then they would have killed Winston without wasting the time or effort on his rehabilitation. O'Brien states, "It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. Even in the instant of death we cannot permit any deviation" (Orwell 210). Here, O'Brien is basically claiming that by rehabilitating Winston before his death, they aim to destroy the concept of individuality. Exiling Bernard to the Islands has the same effect; by isolating social deviants, placing

them outside of the realm of society, the World State can annihilate the concept of individuality and control the concept of identity.

If Bernard, as an Alpha, must be isolated from society because of his individuality, then Mustapha Mond's (the World Controller of the west) insistence that the Savage remain in society (he requested to be sent to the Islands with Bernard but was refused) functions as a different way that the idea of individuality is destroyed. John the Savage represents everything that the citizens of the World State should not be; he practices religion, he abstains from sexual activity, he punishes himself for his sins, he reads Shakespeare and engages in intellectual thought, and he relishes pain and suffering as instruments of discovering one's identity, as in the scene where he sits alone on the mesa after he is stoned by the Indian kids on the reservation (Huxley 136). In that scene, reflecting upon his physical pain led him to discover "Time and Death and God" (Huxley 136). However, despite John's obvious characterization as an individual, his status as "the Savage" delegitimizes his individuality and destroys the concept as effectively as Bernard's forced isolation. The citizens of the World State perceive John as barbaric and uncivilized; therefore, his actions and beliefs are not to be emulated, but to be mocked and wondered at by the population, as we see at the end of the novel when the citizens flock to his place of hermitage to gawk at his self-flagellation. In this way, the First Wave dystopian novelists' portrayal of the totalitarian government's annihilation of the concept of individuality, and its total control over identity, represents the central threat of totalitarianism. In "Who's Afraid of A Brave New World: An argument for the genetic manipulation of human behavior," William Harless reiterates this idea when he says, "The fictional world imagined by Huxley is a sterile and emotionally barren place where

conformity is demanded and creativity and spontaneity are virtually nonexistent; where the hero is the savage whose biology remains unadulterated by technology, and the real savage turns out to be the scientifically manipulated human who has acquiesced in the destruction of his biological essence” (Harless 145). Harless shows how Huxley flips the idea of the hero and the savage to expose the reality of each and to demonstrate that totalitarian governments propagate conformity in order to stigmatize the individual and thus eliminate a threat to itself.

The overall structure of First Wave dystopic narratives revolves around its fear and awareness of the totalitarian state. The narrative structure of these novels mirrors their themes of rigid control and total authority as well as the state’s repression of the individual. For example, both *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Brave New World* are told chronologically; they begin at the beginning of the story and end at the end of the unfolding events with relatively few flashbacks. We are exposed to the story, and understand it, through the eyes of the protagonists, which emphasizes the First Wave dystopian novels’ focus on individuality. However, both stories are told in third person, which stresses the protagonists’ lack of agency throughout their novels since First Wave dystopic fiction focuses purely on the state’s attempt to destroy the individual. There are also no loose ends at the conclusions of either novel; both Winston and Bernard have very clear and definite fates at the end. This narrative element is reminiscent of the totalitarian state’s defining of reality; it is significant that O’Brien tells Winston that he will be shot no matter what after they are through with him, and he does. It is important that the narrative ends with nothing left to question, just as O’Brien leaves Winston with nothing left to confess and no choice about his ultimate fate. Similarly, Bernard does not

have the option to remain with civilization, and the definite end of the Savage's death mirrors the total control of the monolithic state. A uniquely totalitarian characteristic of *Brave New World* is its omniscient narration; it is not the type of narration that gives the individual a voice, but rather a type of omniscience that surveillances the characters, monitoring their thoughts and actions, thus signifying the First Wave dystopic themes of surveillance and psychological control.

In both form and content, First Wave dystopian novels pose the problem of social stability verses individual progress and question whether the two can exist in conjunction. Huxley and Orwell answer this question by exposing the governments' fear of the individual; in each case, social stability is not dependent upon the repression of the individual—rather, the maintenance of the totalitarian state depends on its annihilation of individuality; it is not protecting its population so much as it is protecting itself from its population. Therefore, First Wave dystopic fiction does not find anything inherently contradictory in a state that is stable at the same time as it encourages human progress, and, although it does not necessarily find a solution, it seems to be searching for one. Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, written in the transition period between the First and Second Waves of dystopic fiction, claims to have found that solution and suggests that liberal democracies provide the perfect balance of stability and progress and thus signals the end of the socio-cultural evolution of government. He believed that the end of history was nigh, and that liberal democracy would become universalized as “the final form of government” (Fukuyama xi). However, the emergence of Second Wave dystopic fiction marks the awareness of terrors from which the state cannot protect its citizens, such as globalization, capitalism, increased

interdependence of nations and the breakdown of state sovereignty. The focus shifts between the First and Second Wave dystopian novels from the individual, sovereign power, and the monolithic state to non-state terrors and the inept state. Liberal democracy, instead of becoming the “final form of government,” has created its own, new problems and obstacles for reaching the “end of history.” Tzvetan Todorov summarized the problem well when he identified technology and a loss of state sovereignty as catalysts of the current state of world affairs: “What has happened is the enormous progress of technology, which allows isolated individuals to have as much power as a whole state. It’s called globalization” (“Hope”).

Second Wave Dystopic Fiction:

With the end of the Cold War and Communism, the deep fear of a totalitarian state that marked the fiction of Orwell and Huxley waned; however, dystopic novels did not lose strength, but instead began imagining the kinds of threats that the human race might face in an increasingly globalized world. Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* imagine a state that is too inept to protect its citizens from terrors like global warming, biological warfare, economic crises, terrorism, and other such non-state terrors. Here the primary fear is not simply the total management of an individual's body and mind, but the impossibility of the state to protect against the extinction of the human race; we might characterize this as a shift from disciplinary power to biopower. Foucault makes this distinction when he says that biopower does not exclude disciplinary power, but that it serves as a sort of "second seizure of power that is not individualizing but...massifying...that is directed not at man-as-body but man-as-species" (Foucault 243), that serves to reinforce the methods of control used by mechanisms of disciplinary power. Biopower, then, is characterized by its desire to proliferate life and its ability to act in the name of preserving the species. Consequently, the extinction of the human species becomes the theme of much Second Wave dystopic fiction, like *Oryx and Crake*.

Second Wave dystopic fiction, in particular Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*, seems to simultaneously fear and validate mechanisms of biopower. They fear the extreme manifestation of mechanisms of biopower, but they also recognize the importance of the existence of some mechanism or maintainer of order in society. The political shift from a fear of Communism and the

Red Scare to a fear of terrorism, biological diseases, and increased interdependence of states based on globalization reveals itself in this rather peculiar, confused way in the Second Wave of dystopian novels. They emphasize a world of interconnectedness, claiming that not only do we have to worry about our own failures and mistakes, but those of the rest of the world as well. These novels simultaneously imagine uncontrollable terrors like biological disease and the proliferation of corporate power and yet imagine states that lack the ability to control the outcomes. While the themes of Second Wave dystopic fiction seem inherently paradoxical and contradictory, all of their critiques and cautions ultimately revolve around fears of weakness and vulnerability: mainly, that of the inept state.

Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* opens with the main character, Snowman, looking at his non-working watch on the morning of a day after the world's human population has been completely wiped out. Its "blank face" causes a "jolt of terror to run through him, this absence of official time. Nobody nowhere knows what time it is" (Atwood 3). His fear seems like a trivial thing in light of the near annihilation of the human race; the official time seems irrelevant in a world where time has ended. However, Snowman's worries highlight his nostalgia for mechanisms of order and security. Atwood opens her novel, and filters everything that had happened previously in the novel, through Snowman's apocalyptic perspective. In this way, Atwood imagines a world quite different from Orwell's Oceania or Huxley's World State; here we have a state that is too weak to protect its population from the burgeoning threats of globalization, environmental disasters, and biological warfare.

The complete eradication of the human race that happens in *Oryx and Crake* explains Atwood's version of the changes to history that occur in her dystopian society. It is not so much a changing of history as the almost complete erasure of it, or it will be complete once evidence of human habitation (or humans that existed before the creation of the genetically engineered group of humans known as the Crakers) disappears and once Snowman dies. When discussing his daily routine, Snowman explains that he does not bother to pass his time by writing anything down since he realizes that "he'll have no future reader, because the Crakers can't read. Any reader he can possibly imagine is in the past" (Atwood 41). With this statement, any idea that the reader might have had that the Crakers will carry on the human legacy is squashed; they were genetically engineered with traits that would predispose them to a quieter history than their naturally human predecessors. They are not engineered to process symbols, and so a certain realm of history seems unalterably inaccessible to them. Basically, whereas Huxley and Orwell imagine a future where history has taken a dark turn, Atwood is envisioning the complete end of history. History is over, and time, for all intents and purposes, has stopped.

This idea is emphasized in the scenes in which Snowman chants old words to himself when in need of comfort, which he does numerous times throughout the novel. "'Hang on to the words,' he tells himself. The odd words, the old words, the rare ones. *Valance. Norn. Serendipity. Pibroch. Lubricious*. When they're gone out of his head, these words, they'll be gone, everywhere, forever. As if they had never been" (Atwood 68). These scenes serve to hammer in the terrible implications of such an event happening; the disappearance of words goes along with the eventual disappearance of history, which only exists in the above moment in Snowman's head anyway, just like the

words. In terms of archaeological proof of human existence, like buildings and modes of transportation, the vegetation and mould and natural processes are eliminating them, and “given time it will fissure the asphalt, topple the walls, push inside the roofs....It won’t be long before all traces of human habitation are gone” (Atwood 222). Furthermore, in a scene where Crake, Snowman’s friend from the past that engineered the disease that killed the world population and that engineered a population to replace them called the Crakers, reasons that after the elimination of one generation, “it’s game over forever” (Atwood 223). All of the surface metals will be gone, without which there can be no advancement of technology, and the Crakers will not have the technology to dig deeply enough into the ground to retrieve the remaining metals (Atwood 223). Therefore, Crake’s elimination of the human population is effectively the end of human history.

Another way that history is emphasized in *Oryx and Crake* is through Crake’s genetic engineering of the Crakers to be animal-like in their behavior and to only be capable of understanding simple and basic explanations for their surroundings. For example, Crake engineers them to follow the mating patterns of baboons. An example of their comprehension of the world is Snowman’s use of Oryx, the woman he loved that began to teach the Crakers the fundamentals of life before the destruction of the human race, and Crake as gods and theological bases for explaining difficult concepts to the Crakers. “Crake made the bones of the Children of Crake out of the coral on the beach,” he tells them, “and then he made their flesh out of a mango” (Atwood 96). This very basic behavior and mental framework within which to understand the world seems to represent a reversion to prehistory. It is not the progress of humanity like Crake

imagined it, but the regression of humanity. In this way, Atwood is revealing how the weak state is susceptible to impeding the progress of humanity.

This concept is further elaborated upon in Atwood's novel when Snowman explains the status of art in the society that existed before the annihilation of the human race. Even before history is made irrelevant by the destruction of all humans, artistic and cultural forms of history had already broken down in his society. Snowman recollects his first encounter with Shakespeare, not at school where one might imagine it to have been, but on a reality-television-type website that follows the everyday actions of a woman named Anna K. Traditional artistic forms were already losing their appreciation during that time because of the increasing commodification of every aspect of life. The more corporations seized control of the globe, the less art was appreciated. Furthermore, because of the increasing incidents of biological and political attacks on populations due to the state's inability to protect its citizens, and because of the fact that "live performance had suffered in the sabotage panics of the early twenty-first century" (Atwood 187), people began to lose interest in them out of fear. This makes the inept state responsible for this level of the uncontrollable, and unintentional, erasures of history.

Through Atwood's exploration of the consequences of genetic engineering, we see the state too powerless to stop the negative effects of human ingenuity. In Snowman's previous society, national corporations grew outside of the state's control. Because of this, we see a sort of authoritarian takeover of the state's power by corporations without the stifling of individual autonomy that is portrayed in First Wave dystopic fiction. Instead, we see a wild, uncontainable increase in genetic engineering,

biological experiments, and the use of biological warfare. For example, in Atwood's novel, pigs are crossed with human genes for harvesting organs that are transplantable into humans, called pigoons; there are raccoon/skunk hybrids known as rakunks that are kept as pets by the privileged members of the Compound that live together in gated, "secure" communities because traditional animals like dogs and cats have become susceptible to harmful bioforms (diseases) that may infect the engineering projects of the company around which the Compound is built. There are chickens harvested purely for their meat, genetically engineered without the characteristics of chickens that do not contribute to its primary purpose of providing food, like eyes or a beak or legs. There are dog/wolf mixes called wolvogs that are engineered to look as friendly as dogs but that are as vicious as wolves. All of these genetic engineering projects seem to work well and to suit the purposes that they were engineered to serve. However, their presence throughout the story portrays how fallible humans are in terms of their foresight when genetically engineering these animals; they cannot think of everything that is likely to happen or what genetic traits they engineer into their "products" that might have consequences for the future. For example, Snowman is pursued by a legion of pigoons near the end of the story; the fact that they are crossed with human genes makes them smart enough to coordinate ways in which to trap the protagonist. They are too smart to serve as food, and their increased brain capacity provides a threat to Snowman's existence, so instead of serving their original purpose of harvesting human organs for future transplants, they become unintentional predators—a man-made obstacle to Snowman's future survival. When his father showed him the pigoons when he was a child (his father worked for the company that engineered the pigoons), his sense that "they glanced up at him as if they

saw him, really saw him, and might have plans for him later” (Atwood 26) is ironic; he notices as a child how unnatural they are. Steven Dunning’s conviction that “modernity undoubtedly began as a therapeutic project intended to free society from the repressive pathologies of the past” (Dunning 87) reveals how this scene is also ironic on a more profound level. Allowing human ingenuity free reign might lead to progress, but Atwood ultimately shows that given complete freedom, human ingenuity will do nothing more than engineer its own destruction.

This is probably the more mild way in which genetic engineering is outside of the state’s control. What is perhaps more critical of the inept state is the larger-than-life presence of the multi-national corporations and their actual governance of the members of the Compounds as well as their practice of genetic engineering irrespective of the state’s opinion, or their overtaking of the state. Some of the ways that this showcases the inept state is their usage of bioforms against each other to beat out the opposition. In one of the first scenes in *Oryx and Crake*, Snowman recalls his father taking him to a bonfire where animals were being burned to keep a bioform from spreading; his father’s discussion with a coworker demonstrates their suspicion that it was released by a rival company. What this reveals is a chaotic and uncontrolled warring between the corporations that the state is too weak to stop.

More alarming than even this is Crake’s conviction that corporations were manufacturing bioforms and diseases in order to ensure the people’s continued consumption of their products. He says, “the best diseases, from a business point of view, would be those that cause lingering illnesses. Ideally—that is, for maximum profit—the patient should either get well or die just before all of his or her money runs

out” (Atwood 211). Crake’s father was murdered because of his discovery of such a thing happening within the company he worked for. This is yet another way that corporations, in Atwood’s dystopia, have spiraled way out of the state’s control.

Completely opposite to First Wave dystopian governments’ control over nature is the Second Wave dystopian novelists’ awareness of nature as its own force. In *Oryx and Crake*, the futuristic world is presented as a future where global warming has had a devastating impact on the world, focusing on a biological threat as opposed to a political one. Snowman in his narrative flashback refers to the days “when the leaves still changed color.” He does not go outside without something to cover his skin at noon because of the dangerous and extremely ultraviolet rays of the sun, implying the complete depletion of the ozone. At one point, he talks about *New New York*, mentioning that the old New York and the whole east coast (including Ivy League schools half-forgotten by then, like Harvard) was drowned by a rise of the ocean levels. Similarly, in *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the International Water Council gains its influence through the natural depletion of water sources. The state’s lack of control over nature, then, invalidates its power overall and leads to the emergence of alternative sources of power that are better able to assure the population of its ability to protect them and that are better able to assert their control over seemingly uncontrollable aspects of nature, which come in the form of the Compounds in Atwood’s novel and the International Water Council in Ghosh’s.

Through these alternative forms of control of the population, the Second Wave dystopian novelists demonstrate the state’s lack of control, but also the failures of these forms as well. Therefore, instead of functioning as replacements of the inept state, they exist as yet another level of the failure of the state. In *Oryx and Crake*, the Compounds

are the alternative forms of control of the population, and they annex powers and mechanisms formerly reserved for sovereign states. They are seen as protections from the outside world, and for the sake of security, its members give up their rights to privacy and freedom of mobility. They live in their miniature worlds because they are convinced that a rivaling company could attack at any time. They believed that “there was so much at stake, there was no telling what the other side might resort to. The other side, or the other sides: it wasn’t just one other side you had to watch out for. Other companies, other countries, various factions and plotters. There was too much hardware around... Too much hardware, too much software, too many hostile bioforms, too many weapons of every kind” (Atwood 27-28). The mechanisms of biopower make it necessary that “security mechanisms...be installed around the random element inherent in a population of human beings so as to optimize a state of life” (Foucault 246), and so the leaders of the Compounds use the idea of the progression of humanity as a way to justify its existence. They had “walls and gates and searchlights” (Atwood 27), guards who searched the members frequently and took note of their actions, and they had security teams who went after its dissenting members. When Snowman’s mother ran away from the Compounds, they questioned him and his father frequently and did not stop until they caught her, publicly executing her (forcing her son to watch the video to gauge his reaction in order to make sure he was not collaborating with her). They were very strict about who they let in and who they let out. They were protective against members from rival companies, activist groups that opposed their genetic engineering of animals and tampering with human genes, and against poor people who were not members of any Compounds and who were just opposed to the world order out of anger for their poverty. Danette

DiMarco, in “Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained: Homo Faber and the Makings of a New Beginning in Oryx and Crake,” points out the dangers of this economic power, saying, “this instrumentalism has naturalized the division of labor under capitalism and led to an increased decentralization in governing communities” (DiMarco 171). DiMarco points out that the increase in power and influence of such institutions necessarily decrease the power of the state, override the state’s sovereignty, and expose the state’s ineptitude.

The totalitarian-like seizure of power by the Compounds exposes another level of the failure of the state through its ultimate uselessness in protecting its members. Its failure is seen in the “Compound curtain wall, still twelve feet high but no longer electrocuted...[and] the other gate, which looks as if someone blew it apart” (Atwood 227). As Snowman journeys over to a Compound in present time in order to forage it for supplies for survival, and as he walks “across the moat, past the sentry boxes where the CorpSeCorps armed guards once stood and the glassed-in cubicles where they monitored the surveillance equipment, then past the rampart watchtower with the steel door—standing forever open, now—where he’d once have been ordered to present his thumbprint and the iris of his eye” (Atwood 227), the Compounds are exposed as obsolete and futile because they could not protect its population against the biggest threat of all. They could not protect the population against Crake, who was prized for his intelligence and genius and who was a member of the Compounds. They could not stop the biological disease that he engineered to wipe out the human race effectively and quickly. The Compounds, despite the fact that they themselves were not within the state’s control, failed in its efforts to have control. Therefore, by exposing the absurdity

of any form of power in such a society, Atwood reveals another consequence of the inept state.

Like Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome* also develops the themes of biological diseases and economic corporations as a threat and the alteration of history to expose the breakdown of state sovereignty. However, he plays on the theme of altering history in a different way than his fellow Second Wave dystopian novelist. The fact that it has been characterized as an alternative history by other critics, albeit a science fiction one with mystical elements, reveals the failure of the state to have enough control or power to assert its own version of the historical events. Ghosh's novel focuses on Ronald Ross's discovery of the way in which the malaria virus is relayed through mosquitoes to humans. Instead of allowing Ross, who lived in India during British colonization, to claim that honor, however, Ghosh constructed a narrative that posits that Ross was led to his extraordinary discovery by natives of India who were using him as a tool to make their own breakthroughs concerning something vastly more important to them, which was their quest for immortality. The narrative connects the present, past, and future in a way that exhibits the state's failure to have, or to ever have had, control or power over much of anything.

Diane Nelson, in "Social Science Fiction of Fevers, Delirium and Discovery: The Calcutta Chromosome, the Colonial Laboratory, and the Postcolonial New Human," reiterates the point that the state cannot control the outcome of a situation when she uses a laboratory as a metaphor for colonialism. She writes, "even as each element tied together becomes a conductor or transmitter in a lab, it becomes an unpredictable multi-conductor as well. Each element may act in multifarious ways, modifying, appropriating,

ignoring, mutating. Each object trying to become a fact is not only collectively transmitted from one actor to the next, it is collectively *composed* by actors” (Nelson 254). According to Nelson, just like the behavior of elements in a laboratory, human behavior cannot be completely controlled. The purpose of an experiment is that one does not know what the outcome will be and has little control over it; therefore, Nelson’s metaphor emphasizes the weakness of colonial powers, and thus reminds us of the vulnerability of the state.

Second Wave dystopian novels are characterized by governments so weak that they are powerless to stop the reinterpretation of historical events. The basis of the Second Wave fear, then, is a state so weak that not only history, but the present and the future as well, are indefinitely open to alternative ideas and interpretations. It is like Snowman’s response to not knowing the official time; it is terrifying because it is the collapse of the identifiable barriers that at one time defined reality. The influence of the International Water Council on history in *The Calcutta Chromosome* demonstrates the breakdown of state power and its loss of sovereignty, as it is a powerful entity that exists outside of the state. The International Water Council is the corporation that controls the world’s water, so powerful that the place where two of the characters used to work, LifeWatch (a “non-profit organization that served as a global public health consultancy and epidemiological data bank”), is absorbed by it, “along with many other such independent agencies” (Ghosh 9). They function as a sort of mini-totalitarian power within the state that is more powerful than the state because of its economic control over the people. It has rerouted all of the main water sources to flow into one source that they can easily control. They give workers for independent agencies that they absorbed home-

based jobs and use their employees' computers as surveillance tools in order to ensure their productivity, threatening to decrease their pensions if they do not work hard enough (Ghosh 5). Antar, a character of the future, has a job codifying archaeological inventory for databases for the International Water Council's use; Antar refers to them as "Dust-Counters" in his conviction that "instead of having a historian sift through their dirt, looking for meanings, they wanted to do it themselves: the International Water Council wanted to load their dirt with their own meanings" (Ghosh 7). Antar thinks that "they saw themselves making History with their vast water control experiments" (Ghosh 7). The International Water Council wants to influence the course of history and give it their own meaning, which seems totalitarian; however, it is not the state, but a corporation; in this way, the novel indexes the shift in power from the totalitarian state to economic corporations. It is outside of the state's control, and thus more formidable; its power transcends state sovereignty, which means that they have states within their control instead of it being the other way around. It may function as mildly totalitarian, but this serves only to heighten the novelists' fears of the inept state. Not only does the state fail to have control over its own population's water supply or economy, but it cannot determine the course, or the interpretation, of its own history either.

While Ghosh indexes how the vulnerability of the state allows corporations to seize state power and to define history, he also demonstrates the power given to the individual, through the breakdown of the state's power, to do the same thing. Murugan, the advocate of the belief that Ross did not come up with his malaria theory alone, had a "notion of the so-called 'Other Mind': a theory that some person or persons had systematically interfered with Ronald Ross's experiments to push malaria research in

certain directions while leading it away from others” (Ghosh 37). Murugan not only provides an alternate history for the discovery of mosquitoes’ role in the infection of humans with malaria but also an alternate purpose for future technology as well. Believing that Ronald Ross’s experiment was exploited by people on a quest for immortality, Murugan also believes that his own chance encounters with other characters are orchestrated by this secret group so that they can manipulate knowledge in order to progress to the next step on their quest (because changing knowledge would give them enough quantum energy to make the next leap). When Urmila, a female character whose destiny is intertwined with that of Murugan, asks him why the group is taking so long to get to the “End” of their quest, Murugan replies, “Maybe they’re waiting on a technology that’ll make it easier and quicker to deliver their story to whoever they’re keeping it for: a technology that’ll be a lot more efficient in mounting it than anything that’s available right now” (Ghosh 219). Ghosh is obviously referring to the Internet in this quote; however, it also suggests a manipulation not only of history but of future events as well by entities outside of the state and over which the state has no control. In his theory is present the idea that events and even history can be controlled by individuals, which provides a direct point of contrast with totalitarian governments who do not allow any piece of information to be interpreted outside of the interpretation they give it, and who do everything they can to suppress individual autonomy.

Second Wave dystopic fiction also focuses on the state’s lack of control over biology, in direct contrast to Huxley’s World State and its biological production of the perfect citizens. One scene in which Murugan talks about the resilience of the malaria

strain portrays just how little control can be exercised over disease or biological forms in general. He states,

Malaria's probably the all time biggest killer among diseases. Next to the common cold it's just about the most prevalent disease on the planet....We don't even know how many, because malaria's so widespread it doesn't always get on the charts. And besides, it's a master of disguise: it can mimic the symptoms of more diseases than you can begin to count—lumbago, the flu, cerebral hemorrhage, yellow fever. And even when it's properly diagnosed it's not like quinine is always going to get you home safe. With certain kinds of malaria you can quinine all the live-long day and come nightfall you'll still be gathering freezer-burn in the mortuary; (Ghosh 55-56)

This showcases the elusive nature of biological forms and human's lack of control over them, whether it is the state exercising its power or an individual. It highlights the obvious fact that humans cannot determine their own destinies, nor do they have any control over nature. Any control humans appear to have over biological forms of nature are illusions, like the totalitarian governments of First Wave dystopian novels and the ways they convince their citizens that they control aspects of nature. If nature cannot, in fact, be dominated by man, then it stands to reason that the inept states in Second Wave dystopian novels did not have enough control over its population to convince them of their control. Murugan demonstrates the difficulty of controlling biological forms when he states, “forests, deserts, oceans, warlike natives—that stuff's easy to deal with when you've got dynamite and the Gatling gun: chickenfeed compared to malaria” (Ghosh 56).

In his way, Murugan marks out what can and cannot be managed by the state. He seems to be saying that controlling the natives and adapting to environments is easy, but true power reveals itself when nature itself is dominated. The fact that this never happens in Second Wave dystopian literature and that nature and biological forms are always outside of human control within these narratives reveals the novelists' awareness of the vulnerability of the state's power.

The Calcutta Chromosome also demonstrates the breakdown of the state's control, albeit in a rather different way than Atwood. In *Cartographic Fictions*, Karen Piper illustrates how Ghosh's novel uses Britain's relationship with India as a colonial authority to reveal the ineptitude of the state's power. She states, "both dam building and malaria control were directly linked to notions of colonial authority in British India. *The Calcutta Chromosome*, however, uses the illusion of control as a kind of subterfuge that allows the colonized to actually carry on their own discoveries" (Piper 164). She also claims that the novel's alternate explanation for the discovery of the characteristics of malaria functions as "an allegory of failures of colonialism" (Piper 167). This is shown through Murugan's explanation of how the cult manipulated Ross's discoveries. He says, "let's say that by accident or design they've made a certain amount of progress; they've taken their work to a certain point and then they've run smack into a dead end: they're stuck, they can't go any further—because of the glitches in their own methods, because they just haven't got the right equipment.... They decide that the next big leap in their project will come from a mutation in the parasite. The question now is: how do they speed up the process? The answer is: they've got to find a conventional scientist who'll give it a push" (Ghosh 105-106), at which point, they find Ron and manipulate him for

their own means. The connection to colonialism then, when the native's manipulation of colonial authority is analyzed, references the weakness of the state's power. If colonial methods failed in the past, representing the inept state of the past, then the International Water Council of the future would seem to be a result of the failed state. The birth of the cult that rose out of resistance of colonial power represents the failure of the state's control; however, its transcendence through past, present, and future invalidates the power of the International Water Council as well, because it cannot destroy it. The only thing that the International Water Council can do is refer to the members of the cult as "mad" and existing in "an alternative inner state" (Ghosh 240) (as they do when summoning up a holographic image of Murugan for Antar to question), invalidating their experiences. They cannot, however, control the actions of the cult, and so this functions as another level that the power of the state is shown to be inept.

In their fiction, Atwood and Ghosh reveal their fears of the inept state through exposing its lack of control over history, the economy, nature, and biological diseases. They also demonstrate a double failure on the part of the state by showing how they not only fail to keep alternative powers from rising but how that failure makes the state responsible for the failures of those alternative powers as well. These characteristics of Second Wave dystopic fiction function as direct points of contrast to the characteristics of the totalitarian states that are central to First Wave dystopian novels. These direct differences, based on the function of the state in their novels, put the totalitarian state up against the inept state, revealing the central political fears of these states. However, besides the characteristics of the state that are revealed in First and Second Wave

dystopic fiction, their plot trajectories also mirror the differences in central themes of these novels.

Not only do Atwood and Ghosh's novels imagine different dystopias, but they both generate new narrative devices to accommodate these new threats to the human race as well. In *Oryx and Crake*, we are introduced to Snowman as he exists after most of the action that happens in the story. The whole story, then, is told through a weaving of the past and the present, through Snowman's flashbacks, confusing italicized phrases that may be the imagined spirit of Snowman's dead lover, and his direct narration of things as they are happening in the present and his renditions of events as they happened in the past. The narrative of the story, then, seems to be as unordered as the inept state. It is uncontrollable; the story reveals itself as Snowman feels capable of the challenge of retelling it and thus reliving it. It places the reader in the position of almost wanting more order; in the absence of order and a chronological plot, the reader is in a state of almost perpetual confusion. Even the ending fails to give the reader a sense of understanding and comprehension; a lot of the story's ends are left untied, and the story is left in the same way that it was begun: surrounded in confusion.

The trajectory of the plot of *The Calcutta Chromosome* is not much different. It not only juggles with the present and the past, but hints at the future and contains various levels of the past, none of which is told in chronological order. The mystical element of reincarnation and the transmitting of souls from one body to another only serve to confuse one's grasp of time throughout the novel. Furthermore, the confusion of the characters as pertains to their own stories translates to the reader; as one critic remarks, "the narrative is also a game with narrative itself: Ghosh's characters are not so much

telling the story as being told by it” (qtd in Piper 164). The readers are given the story as the characters themselves are involved in unfolding it; therefore, like Atwood’s dystopian novel, the plot structure of Ghosh’s novel also mimics the disorder of the inept state.

Furthermore, the ending leaves the reader as confused as Atwood’s novel does; although most of the loose ends are tied up the end of Ghosh’s novel, the ending does not point the reader to a certain conclusion as in First Wave dystopic fiction, but serves to open up an entirely new question, thus mirroring its central theme of the breakdown of state power.

One of the confusing things about Second Wave dystopian novels is deciphering their meaning; it is hard to tell what the connotations of its fear of the inept state actually are. At some points, it seems to advocate totalitarian rule as at least more stable than the state with no power. Its exposure of alternate sources of power as totalitarian in nature, and the ultimate failure of these powers, however, leaves one questioning its message concerning the inept state. It is apparent that it is the central fear of Second Wave dystopic fiction, and the consequences of the inept state are given much consideration throughout these novels, but they do not seem to offer a solution. It seems to fault the state for its failure to protect its citizens from uncontrollable terrors, but it is difficult to grasp the point of revealing the state in its ineptitude. If the state is too inept to protect its citizens from everything, and nothing else is powerful enough to do so, then Second Wave dystopian novels seem to be advocating an alternate purpose of the state. Perhaps revealing the inept state does not necessarily mean that totalitarianism is more desirable, but that the point of the state is to serve a different function altogether.

Remakes of Dystopic Fiction:

What has been demonstrated throughout this essay so far is that the genre of dystopic fiction indexes the change in the idea of political terror over time from the First Wave fear of the monolithic state before the Cold War to the Second Wave fear of the inept state after the collapse of Communism and the accelerated globalization of the world. In recent years, cinematic remakes of late 20th century dystopian novels mark a similar redefinition of the idea of political terror happening within a shorter period of time. Alfonso Cuarón's remake of P.D. James' 1992 novel, *The Children of Men*, and James McTeigue's film adaptation of Alan Moore's 1980s graphic novel *V for Vendetta* are both very good examples of this. Both novels were written in the transitional period between the two waves of dystopic fiction. The changes that are made to the narratives in both films portray their shift from an indecisive inclusion of ideas of political terror from both waves to a decided re-imagination of the plots through the lens of Second Wave political terrors. These film remakes also show how the idea of political terror is constantly being redefined in dystopian narratives. What is particularly useful about the film remakes, however, is that because they are not new visions of dystopias, but revisions of dystopias through their changing of preexisting plots, it allows us to analyze the particular changes that are made to the narratives of dystopic fiction.

Cuarón's *Children of Men*, despite the novel's preexisting imaginations of ideas of Second Wave terrors such as its theme of biological disasters through its exploration of a world of sudden global infertility, surprisingly internalizes the more relevant political problems of the year of the film's creation (2005) in ways that considerably change the meaning and overall fears of the narrative. The obvious presence of recent politics, like

the Iraq War and references to the Bush Administration, mark the change of the narrative from a focus on the terrors associated with the late 20th century Post Cold War to the 21st century War on Terror. The way that this is the most effectively done, Slavoj Zizek notes, is through the persistence of the background throughout the film (Zizek, “Clash”). Through its subtle use of the background, *Children of Men* transforms James’ narrative from a novel that imagines both the totalitarian and the inept states as ideas of political terror into a “science-fiction of our present itself” (Zizek, “Clash”). The ways that the background asserts itself throughout Cuarón’s film are countless. Clive Owen, who plays Theo in the film, remarks upon the obvious stagnation of progress portrayed throughout the film, such as the parked cars that are shown at the beginning of the film that are rather diminished versions of present-day models that portray humanity’s lack of interest in progress as a result of global infertility (“Under Attack”). Zizek similarly notes the scene in which Theo walks into the foyer of his rich cousin’s home to find an original Michelangelo statue; sitting in the middle of some rich collector’s home, he says, it loses its value; it almost looks absurd (Zizek, “Comments”). This scene shows not only the stagnation of human progress that is apparent throughout the film, but humanity’s disinterest in progressing. A very compelling phrase calls attention to itself as it zooms past in the background through the window of a train that Theo is riding; “Last one to die, please turn out the light,” it states in graffiti art sprayed across a small billboard. This statement is ironic not only because it portrays humanity’s disinterestedness and desire to halt progress, but the background of the film shows how the lights have already started to dim.

The presence of anti-Bush administration and anti-Iraq War sentiments in the background of *Children of Men* demonstrates the film's revision of dystopian power through actual internalization of 21st century conflicts. Across the walls of Theo's friends' house are articles he wrote protesting England's inacceptance of immigrants and refugees, but also anti-Iraq war articles with titles like "M15 Deny Involvement in Torture of Photojournalist," "US Troops Full Attack," "Extremist Explosion," various newspaper photographs of people holding protest signs that say, "Don't Attack Iraq," "Out of Iraq," "Bring Them Home Now," "War is Not the Answer," "Blair Must Go," and even various graphics of Bush's and Blair's names splattered with blood. There are also images of torture victims of Abu Ghraib posted across the walls of the Fishes' (an anti-governmental rebel group) hideout. The political implications of these images and articles fix the film's dystopia within its historical moment and also specify the idea of political terror by attributing them to a particular administration and event, in this case, Bush and Blair's administration and the start of the Iraq War.

The techniques of film making themselves influence the definition of political terror in *Children of Men* and make it relevant for the present. Julianne Moore and Clive Owen discuss how Cuarón insisted on filming scenes with long takes; later on in the same documentary, Alfonso Cuarón states that the purpose of this is to bring the film closer to reality ("Under Attack"). In Cuarón's film, the techniques that he uses make it possible to lose yourself in the themes and vividness and current relevance of the film; long takes help one stay with, and internalize, the action; the dimming down of color throughout the film also reflects the gloominess of its themes and keeps one in the right mood to appreciate the unfolding events. The film techniques in the car scene also bring

one closer to the film and to the action that later unfolds; you are lured into the car through the strategic maneuvering of the camera and through the playful attitudes of the passengers. When violence shortly ensues, and Julian (Theo's ex-wife, in the film) is shot, having previously felt a part of the car ride, you too feel violated and insecure. Although the camera and film techniques do not necessarily contribute to the explicit changes that are made to the narrative in Cuarón's film, their ability to bring one closer to the action and to bring the film into one's realm of reality causes you to feel the effects of the state's inability to protect. The film techniques highlight the Second Wave terrors of the inept state, whereas the novel includes mild elements of both First and Second Wave fears, emphasizing neither. In this way, the film techniques materially add to the changing of the definition of political terror that occurs between the novel and the film.

Commentators and critics of the film all take for granted that *Children of Men* is a film that critiques the present state of world affairs. They all utilize the Second Wave ideas of political terror in order to showcase the film's relevance to the present. For example, Saskia Sassen discusses the terror of climate change, saying that it will undoubtedly decrease the amount of available living space through flooding and other natural disasters which will lead to mass migration and political measures taken against environmental refugees ("Hope"). John Gray says, quite memorably, that "the human species has overshoot the capacity of the planet to sustain it" and elaborates further that climate change is unstoppable and the only thing humans can do is stop it from accelerating ("Hope"), thus pointing to the environment as a force outside of the control of the state. Naomi Klein discusses the dangers of the economy, saying, "the economic model is so destructive that disasters have increased" ("Hope"). Žižek notes the images

of the wall that keeps the refugees from entering England, saying that “democracy is segregation, the practical ethic of globalization is that new walls are popping up all around” (“Hope”). In *Children of Men*, all of the commentators obviously understand the idea of political terror through the fear of the inept state and terrors like economic crises, biological warfare, and environmental disasters. This shows that not only does Cuarón’s remake internalize present problems and remind the viewer of solid political fears, but it also takes the narrative out of its original historical moment of the fall of Communism and places it in within the realm of Second Wave dystopic fiction by making the fears of the narrative all relevant within the Second Wave dystopia’s definition of political terror.

James McTeigue’s *V for Vendetta* is another remake of a transitional dystopic narrative that indexes the changing idea of political terror in the short term, but it makes different narrative changes than are made in *Children of Men*. This may be because James’ novel already included many elements of the inept state while Alan Moore’s graphic novel focused primarily on the fear of totalitarianism. In any case, McTeigue’s film adaptation deliberately includes current terrors in order to update the theme of the narrative through his inclusion of biological disease and biological engineering for purposes of economic gain. Furthermore, like *Children of Men*, McTeigue also hints at the present state of world affairs in order to make the themes of the narrative more relevant; however, he does this in a completely different way than Cuarón, which ultimately has a different effect on the viewer.

One of the most prominent differences between Moore’s graphic novel and McTeigue’s remake of it, besides the fact that the film was completely rejected by Moore (Williams 18), is that the novel’s dystopian power is established through the terror of a

nuclear war, which is a clear symbol of sovereign power (Foucault 245) and thus more a totalitarian characterization of terror, but the film updated the theme of political terror to revolve around the inept state by replacing the nuclear war with the biological engineering of a disease by the government so that it could seize control of the population and make money off of the drugs that they dispersed. Making this change reveals the film's imagining of Second Wave terrors like biological engineering and disease as well as economic powers. The fact that the engineers of the disease are the same people that take control over the population and that also make money off of the medicine that they dispersed to convince the population of its authority still has embedded in it the original totalitarian fears of Moore's graphic novel; however, it also updates the themes to reflect the Second Wave ideas of political terror as well, which makes the narrative more relevant to the present-day.

Tony Williams' discussion of the present-day political relevance of the film *V for Vendetta* also reveals how McTeigue's film adaptation updates the narrative. Williams discusses all of the different ways that current political events are hinted at throughout the film when he states that, "*V for Vendetta's* England with its gay-bashing, spin doctoring news manipulation, Guantanamo Bay type concentration camps, and brutal authoritarian control really represents a dystopian version of contemporary America which is now continuing the legacy of Nazi Germany with suspension of civil liberties for suspected 'terrorists', illegal confinement, government surveillance in defiance of its Constitution, torture, humiliation, and murder of prisoners aided by the complicity of an apathetic population who are the twenty-first century's equivalent of Hitler's 'willing executioners'" (Williams 18). By saying this, Williams is explicitly arguing that, instead

of merely making the narrative relevant to the present-day, McTeigue is making a statement about the American government's abuse of power. However, unlike Cuarón's films, the references to political events or administrations are not clearly stated through utilization of the background, but is done subtly, such as Evey's prison uniform that "is the same color as the jump suits worn by prisoners held illegally in that infamous outpost," (Williams 22) by which he means Guantanamo Bay. He also references other correlations between the events in the movie and recent events, like the theme of the government not protecting its citizens through the film by deliberately genetically engineering a disease against them, and in the American government through failing to prevent the events on September 11th despite their reception of warnings previous to the event.

The subtle nature of the film's politics differs greatly from the persistence of recent political events in the background of *Children of Men*. Williams argues in "Assessing V for Vendetta" that the reason for this is perhaps McTeigue's utilization of *V for Vendetta* to specifically make a political statement. Whereas Cuarón merely aims to make a good film and to make the concerns of the narrative relevant to current times, McTeigue aims to encourage action and mobilize the population. In order to so do, McTeigue would necessarily have to make his references to current politics more subtly than Cuarón in order to not come off too strong.

The remakes of James' and Moore's dystopias show that ideas of political terror are constantly changing. The filmmakers' sense that updating the dystopias was necessary reinforces the nature of dystopic fiction as an indicator of the idea of political terror and its internalization of present problems. McTeigue and Cuarón both make

narrative changes that particularly change the ways that we imagine and understand the power of the state within the context of their films; these changes primarily include a shift from a mix of totalitarian fears and the fear of the inept state to changes that specifically reflect upon biological, environmental, and economic disasters as well as the very current fear of terrorism that exposes the vulnerability of the state's power.

Concluding Remarks: Dystopian Endings

To effectively end my argument, it seems appropriate to do an analysis of the endings of the dystopian works that are the subject of my thesis. Tom Moylan has assessed the endings of dystopic fiction as inherently hopeful, believing that the aim of dystopic fiction is to discuss and expose the flaws of society in order to outline the necessity for change and how exactly to go about it (Moylan, *SUS*, 33). His assertion that dystopian novels provide a basis for hoping that “humanity will again prevail” (Moylan, *SUS* 111) is an interesting one, especially in terms of their endings which, regardless of whether they belong to the First Wave or Second Wave of dystopic fiction, decidedly end on terms of despair and seem incapable of imagining alternatives. Earlier dystopian novels all seem to have a tendency toward conservative endings without imagination or alternative possibilities. They seem to be unable to comprehend or imagine any other possible endings. Some are more optimistic than others, but they all seem to end without the capability to imagine other possibilities for the human race.

The underlying theme of all of the dystopic endings is their inability to envision a different future for mankind. Everything seems to fit along a cycle of human behavior, whether the ending is hopeful or hopeless. Mankind can overcome the situation and create a new world, but there is always the fear of history repeating itself waiting in the gloom due to the seemingly unchangeable quality of human nature. If humans cannot overcome it, the novelists seem to claim, they will be doomed to live that way for all of eternity.

Where dystopian novelists go wrong is that they seek the solution to the situations in their novels through the concept of sovereignty, by invoking right. Foucault writes,

“we now find ourselves in a situation where the only existing and apparently solid recourse we have against the usurpations of disciplinary mechanics and against the rise of a power that is bound up with scientific knowledge is precisely a recourse or return to a right that is organized around sovereignty, or that is articulated on that old principle” (39). Foucault states, however, that this is the wrong way to go about it. “At this point,” he says, “we are in a sort of bottleneck, that we cannot go on working like this forever; having recourse to sovereignty will not enable us to limit the effects of disciplinary power” (39). This rings very true in terms of the endings of both First and Second Wave dystopian novels. Although the First Wave dystopian novelists hoped for the breakdown of state sovereignty, they were unable to envision the alternative. Because of this, we see the endings of these novels generally invoking sovereignty through latching on to the right of individual autonomy. We see this in the deaths of key characters in both *Brave New World* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. For example, Winston’s rehabilitation and ultimate death at the end of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is distressing and tragic. Winston is executed, despite his renunciation of his previous opposition to the Party, for the purpose suppressing the concept of individuality. By making Winston’s death tragic, Orwell is in fact invoking the very idea that the total state is trying to contain. *Brave New World* invokes sovereignty at the end of the novel through the death of the Savage. The Savage is allowed to remain among society because he represents an undesirable form of individuality and will thus influence society to aspire to be his opposite. The novel ends with the Savage’s self-flagellating and later suicide. Through this ending, Huxley has his main character seize his right to stop living, which is recourse to his individual sovereignty.

Second Wave dystopian novelists live in the aftermath of the breakdown of sovereignty and thus understand its consequences; however, they are incapable of thinking of a better solution to the problem of balancing stability with human ingenuity and progress. Atwood ends her novel with her protagonist hiding behind a bush, spying on three other survivors of the genetically engineered disease, deciding whether to befriend them or to commit murder. Throughout her entire novel, Atwood questions unlimited human ingenuity and individual autonomy; however, relatively speaking, Atwood's ending is the ultimate invocation of sovereignty, as she references individual autonomy by leaving the fate of the human race in a single individual's hands. Ghosh's ending with the idea of immortality, and Antar joining the cult of immortality, invokes a higher truth [which Hegel references as a component of sovereignty (Hegel 275)] by portraying the transcendence of a higher power through time and physical location. In both Second Wave novels, we see the novelists unwittingly returning back to the idea of sovereignty. The endings seem to be hopeless, then, because there does not seem to be a workable solution to the problem.

So, where is the source of hope? Where does Moylan's conviction that dystopic fiction clings to the expectation that "humanity will again prevail" come from? One possible answer to this question is through Žižek's answer to the former question. "Hope," he says, "is only where despair is. The magic is in turning desperate situations into a new beginning" ("Hope"). The way that dystopic fiction traditionally exercised this method of hope is to revert to religious or ideological visions of new beginnings. Huxley and James both capitalize upon religious symbolism at the end of their novels; the Savage's self-flagellation and ultimate suicide at the end of the Huxley's novel

symbolizes a sort of self-sacrifice. The ending shot of the *Children of Men* film with the woman and the miracle-baby floating away in their boat into the fog utilizes Christian symbolism of the Virgin Mary. By doing this, Huxley and James are ultimately clinging to religion as a way to generate a new beginning out of a desperate situation. The post-ideological framework of Second Wave dystopic fiction, then, has to find a way to generate a new beginning outside of religion. Antar's transition from his present to the timeless and immortal dimension of Murugan and the other members of the cult on the quest for immortality indicates Ghosh's focus on time and human transcendence of situations as the source of hope.

Atwood's hope, however, is more difficult to decipher. She does not inform the reader of what decision Snowman ultimately makes; however, it is hard not to imagine that Snowman will act consciously and morally and attempt to befriend the other humans. We see instances of Snowman's morality previous to this scene when he notes that sometimes he thought that people took genetic engineering too far. We also see him criticize Crake's genetic engineering of a disease that killed the population on moral grounds. Our familiarity with Snowman makes us willing to believe that he will take the better route; therefore, perhaps Atwood's hope lies in the human conscious.

Zizek suggests that radical hope emerges only from the most radical despair. If dystopic fiction reveals its fears of political terror, political terror being the threat to the safety and autonomy of the individual, and if it is inherently hopeful as Moylan suggests, then it is perhaps suggesting that human progress and evolution only occurs when humanity is taken past its breaking point. In this way, hope stems from the dystopic fiction writer's conviction that when pushed to the brink of its existence, humanity is

capable of great things. Only when humans are challenged and must fight for their existence can we truly say about ourselves that we are alive. If the Second Wave dystopian writers must cling to some hope for humanity outside of liberal democracy, which they openly criticize, then perhaps this is it; instead of attempting to eliminate threats and political terrors, they must believe that extraordinary things can only happen when humanity is pushed to the edge of despair.

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